



July 15, 2015

Volume 1

Key Points:

- “Applied Studies Diploma” should be reflected on 2016 diplomas.
- TTAC workgroups are developing skills and competencies
- An electronic platform is in development to assist teachers with monitoring and communicating student progress

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Applied Studies Diploma Bulletin

Beginning July 1, 2015, state legislation has eliminated the term “Special Diploma”. In lieu of this language, the term “Applied Studies Diploma” will be used. At this point, this is a name change only. The Applied Studies Diploma will be available to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP and who do not meet the requirements for other diplomas.

Curriculum Framework: What to Expect

VDOE is developing the Applied Studies Framework based upon national research analysis and stakeholder input to meet the needs of students with disabilities more effectively and to align instruction with the mission of the Department of Special Education. The framework will include:

1. a curriculum map including a hierarchic structure of domains, competencies and skills to provide an outline for teaching critical life skills
2. resources to support planning and instruction using the curriculum map
3. guidelines for awarding seals to the Applied Studies diploma to recognize student achievement
4. an academic resume template to better communicate skills to potential employers, case workers, post-secondary training or education admission counselors and the community at-large
5. recurring themes of self-determination, communication, and technology

Newsletter Spotlight

The VDOE Office of Special Education Instructional Services would like to thank the regional Technical Assistance and Training Centers for their hard work in organizing teams and developing the skills and competencies as part of the Curriculum Framework.

If you have questions or comments please contact Daniel Irwin at

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